

# CHÂLET CHIC

A CLASSIC  
A-FRAME IN  
THE CATSKILLS  
BECOMES THE  
IDEAL MODEL  
HOME FOR AN  
UP-AND-COMING  
INTERIOR  
DESIGNER.

STORY BY SANDRA S. SORIA  
INTERIOR DESIGN BY JAMIE SMITH, SMITH HOME STUDIO  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID ENGELHARDT

By choosing furniture that hugs—a curvaceous West Elm sofa and Lulu and Georgia swivel chairs—and tactile textiles, designer Jamie Smith creates a space that soothes. They're joined by a plush Armadillo rug and nesting tables by Lulu and Georgia.





The dining room opens to the kitchen to create a space for gathering. Lulu and Georgia's Archer dining table and Crate & Barrel's Ceremonie bouclé-covered dining chairs invite lingering. The Trapeze pendant is by Apparatus.



Calacatta Vaghi Rosato marble "was a must-have," Jamie says. "It's the main player in the play." To counter its visual "movement," she used creamy Italian Lapitec stone on the island. White oak cupboards and floors add more natural beauty. The sconce is by Eny Lee Parker.



**Y**ou might say Jamie Smith took a less traveled road into interior design. With master's degrees in both environmental science and urban planning, she spent several years studying the impact of development on the Everglades for the Audubon Society. Fast-forward a few years, a marriage, two kids, and she found herself living in New Jersey with a new desire. "I wanted to build structures—not high-rises necessarily—I wanted to work for a developer," she says.

Jamie found her way to one of Montclair's preeminent developers, Steven Plofker, an expert in historic renovations. He also happens to be married to cosmetics and beauty genius Bobbi Brown. Jamie worked with the two on their boutique inn, The George. "It wasn't just about the hard surfaces," she recalls, "but also the furniture and soft elements and figuring out layouts for each room. I loved every minute of it." Then, she got the nudge she needed to take the next fork in the road. "I was styling some of the background spaces where they

were photographing and filming Bobbi," Jamie remembers, "and she looked at me and said, 'You're really good at this.' Getting an endorsement from somebody like Bobbi Brown just meant the world to me. I thought to myself that evening, *maybe I can do this.*" That was when the idea of earning an interior design certification and starting Smith Home Studio was hatched, and where this A-frame comes into focus. Located at the base of Hunter Mountain in the Catskills, the classic 1970s house served as a getaway for Jamie and her family, all

avid skiers. They had owned the place for seven years, but as her two children grew, so did Jamie's desire for more space. She also wanted a kind of "model home" to share with prospective design clients. The tiny, dated chalet was an ideal candidate to show the breadth of her skills at design's hard and soft sides. The challenge was to expand the home's living area respectfully. "The really special part about the A-frame is that we're in a neighborhood of A-frames," Jamie explains. "There was some kit that happened in 1970 that a bunch of people had purchased and built in this beautiful community called Colonels Chair." Working with another "ski dad" in the neighborhood,





The primary bedroom is a haven with natural linens, Jenni Kayne furniture, an Armadillo rug, and a view. "I wanted as much glass as possible," Jamie says. "We don't even have shades on those windows it's so private."



Ken Hudes, architect and founder of Atelier NY, they came up with a clever solution. By enclosing a front porch, they gained an entry, mudroom, and guest room space. Then came the geometry. "From the back, we took off a quarter of the A-frame's roof, and then we did the asymmetrical roofline that went beyond the old structure of the wall," she says, crediting contractor Jeremy Constable for his skill. "That's where we bought the most space. The bunk bed in the basement, a kitchen on the main floor, and our primary suite uptop are all in that addition."

With the architectural puzzle solved, Jamie's interior vision took shape. "I started calling it 'soft modern,'" she says. "I wanted it to have very clean lines as a foundation, but then layer it with organic shapes, textures, and colors."

The palette was pulled from the verdant surroundings, and from the original pine paneling that was removed during the renovation, then refinished to bring out its natural golden hues. "By keeping the design within this palette and those textures," she says, "it felt like a natural extension of the environment."

The curvaceous furniture and hardwearing natural fabrics and materials set the stage for how the cabin lives. "It was important to me that people come in and feel welcomed," Jamie says. "I want my spaces to feel like you can sit down and put your feet up. Like it feels really, really good to your soul to be there. It's beautiful and it's elevated, but nothing is precious."

Her clients—aka the Smith family—agree that the goal was met. "When we spent the first week in the A-frame after it was completed," Jamie says, "it felt so good—solid and embracing. And it feels like every nook and cranny was thoughtfully designed. We're using the space with so much intention now because we designed it ourselves."



Modern Pamela lounge chairs by Lulu and Georgia are both sculpture and seating. The Malm Fire Drum freestanding fireplace adds midcentury-modern style.





The upper level primary and main floor bunk room are made for nesting. With bent-wood railings and paneling, the bunk beds “read as a whole piece,” says Jamie, who needed the space to be TV/guest/kids’ room. “That’s what sparked the idea to make the bunks feel like a piece of art.”

Jamie maximized small spaces with clever design. Creating a closet under the eaves made way for a desk, and a small primary bath becomes a spa when a soaking tub and shower occupy the same space, wet-room style. Lapidary Cabochon travertine tile from Clé complete the look.

Jamie wanted to return age-yellowed pine to a more natural state. After sanding, she used Bona sealer, which has a bit of white to neutralize the wood tones. “It’s a magical product,” she says. Enclosing the area under a terrace gained living space without altering the street-facing silhouette.

Leaving the front of the A-frame intact to honor its history, Jamie created an asymmetrical roofline in the back, making way for a larger kitchen and primary bedroom. A spacious deck extends the living space, outfitted with a Four Hands sectional and West Elm Porto chairs.

